



Wastewater News

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Clean Water . . . a better environment
Office of Wastewater Management

Working towards Clean Water



Upcoming Meetings, Conferences and Training

Office of Wastewater Management (OWM) Session(s) at August 1998 National Meeting (Strengthening the Foundation of the Nation's Water Quality Program, Philadelphia, PA, August 24-28, 1998, Sponsored by the Office of Water) -

NPDES Permit Writers' Training Course

Permits Division conducted the NPDES Permit Writers' Training Course in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on May 11-15. This was the third of a series of five courses that will be co-sponsored by the Department of the Navy and the Department of Energy in 1998. Other course locations planned for this year are Austin, Texas; and Seattle, Washington. For more information, contact Daniel Weese on (202) 260-6809.

Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET)

Laura Phillips, EPA Headquarters (OWM) and Phillip Jennings, EPA Region VI (NPDES Permitting Branch) will be providing a brief presentation on the status and developments of the EPA Headquarters/Regional work group activities on the issues outlined in the U.S. EPA February 1997 draft National

WET Implementation Strategy including a focus on the topic of reasonable potential with respect to WET permit limits.

The session will begin with framing the genesis of the EPA workgroup with respect to the U.S. EPA 1997 draft National WET Implementation Strategy. The draft strategy was issued as part of EPA's commitment to undertake a *Afine-tuning@* and *Amid-course@* correction to an existing WET program. The draft WET Implementation Strategy outlined the Agency's thoughts on how to improve the implementation of the WET program.

The session will include a discussion of the development of a final National WET Implementation Strategy and the development of various program enhancements supporting the strategy, including a section on reasonable potential (RP). For further information, please contact: Laura Phillips, U.S. EPA (OWM) at (202) 260-9522 or Aphillips.laura@epa.gov or Phillip Jennings, U.S. EPA, Region VI at (214) 665-7538 or Ajennings.phillip@epa.gov

Title VI Federal Implementation Advisory Committee Meeting

The National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology, Title VI Implementation Advisory Committee will be holding meetings on July 27-28, 1998 in Philadelphia, and October 19-20, 1998 (location to be determined). Title VI of the Civil

Rights Act prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin in their programs or activities. The purpose of this committee is to review and evaluate existing tools, techniques and processes for 1) assessing whether disparate impacts based on race, color, or national origin have occurred or have the potential to occur; 2) mitigating disparate impacts where they occur; and 3) operating environmental permitting programs in compliance with Title VI. For more information, contact Angela Lee on (202) 260-6814 and Mahesh Podar on (202) 260-5387.

CLEAN WATER NEEDS SURVEY (CWNS) DATABASE MODERNIZATION

An Alpha Test of the production system for the CWNS database took place at the Systems Development Center (SDC) in Arlington, VA on June 15-17. The Alpha Test provided EPA and other participants the opportunity to see how the system will function to support the CWNS 2000. It also afforded participants an opportunity for hands-on experience with the production database system. Following the alpha testing, additional training on the production system will be conducted at Region II offices on September 15 -17, 1998. Installation will occur in late fall. For more information, contact Jim Shuster on (202) 260-5829.

2 The Office of Wastewater Management

Pretreatment Training Course

The National Pretreatment Program Team, in coordination with Water Environment Federation will be offering "The Pretreatment Training Course" in Raleigh, NC on July 20 & 21. The objective of this training course is to provide the basic regulatory framework and technical considerations that support the development and implementation of pretreatment programs under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program and the Clean Water Act (CWA). The course is designed and recommended for environmental professionals responsible for implementing the Pretreatment Program at the local level, industrial dischargers,



consultants, and especially individuals that are new to the program. To register for the course, please contact Water Environment Federation at 1-800-666-0206. For more information on course content, please contact Pat Bradley on (202) 260-6963.

Regulations at Work

Project XL: Performance-Based Pretreatment Pilot Programs (Federal Register Notice -Request for Proposals)

EPA recently published a Federal Register notice (June 23; 63 FR 34170) requesting proposals from POTWs interested in implementing alternative local pretreatment programs. EPA is not proposing a change to the regulations at this time. Instead, in response to the findings of stakeholder studies regarding measures of performance, EPA is requesting POTWs interested in implementing environmental performance-based programs to submit Project XL proposals explaining how they would change their pretreatment program implementation.

To qualify for this Project XL program a POTW must: currently administer an approved pretreatment program; have a solid record of compliance; and have five years of influent, effluent, and sludge quality data, as well as three years of ambient water quality measurements for its receiving water or be able to demonstrate the ability to collect ambient data. The project proposed by the POTW must then meet the Project XL criteria as explained in the Federal Register notice.

The intent is to allow programs that have demonstrated a strong compliance record and an ability to measure environmental performance to investigate alternative ways of implementing local pretreatment programs that will produce superior environmental performance. The alternate program would use specific measures to determine whether or not implementation procedures are achieving their desired results.

Some POTWs which have mastered the programmatic aspects of the pretreatment program (identifying industrial users, permitting, monitoring, etc.), want to move into more environmental performance-based processes. These POTWs have expressed an interest in

being allowed flexibility to focus their resources on procedures that they believe will provide greater environmental benefit. These POTWs want to be able to make decisions to allocate resources based on the risk associated with industrial contributions they receive or other factors. Some POTWs want to be able to apply resources to ambient monitoring in their receiving waters and/or to integrate their pretreatment programs with their storm water monitoring programs. Since they have limited resources, the POTWs believe they need the flexibility to drop some of the prescribed programmatic elements and redirect these resources.

Given all of these considerations, the pilot program is being limited to POTWs that have mastered the programmatic elements and have available a significant amount of environmental performance data (or a demonstrated ability to collect the necessary data). These conditions can form the basis for creative alternative approaches that best allocate limited resources. It is expected that by providing this discretion to the POTWs, the POTWs will be able to focus their limited resources on activities that produce superior environmental performance.

For local POTW Pretreatment Programs, superior environmental performance may include:

(i) Reducing pollutant loadings to the environment or achieving some other environmental benefit beyond that currently achieved through the existing pretreatment program (including collecting environmental performance data and data related to environmental impacts in order to measure the environmental benefit. Such information would include data on pollutant loadings to the environment,

3 The Office of Wastewater Management

ambient environmental conditions and measures of the impact of these conditions on the health of ecosystems. The data should be able to support decisions concerning the future use of pretreatment program resources),

(ii) Reducing or optimizing costs related to implementation of the pretreatment program with the savings used to attain environmental benefits elsewhere in the watershed in any media, and

(iii) Other environmental benefits gained by allowing pretreatment program flexibility.

If you have any questions or if you would like additional clarification please contact Patrick Bradley at (202) 260-6963.

Cooling Water Intake Structures (316(b) rulemaking)

On May 21, 1998, EPA published a notice in the *Federal Register*, announcing a public meeting on Monday, June 29, 1998 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Crystal City Marriott, 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202. The purpose of this meeting was to facilitate the exchange of information on specific EPA issues related to defining and measuring adverse environmental impacts from cooling water intake structures.

On May 22, 1998, several members of the EPA 316(b) workgroup met with the Utility Water Act Group (UWAG) to discuss UWAG's numerous comments on the detailed questionnaire which was public noticed for comment on January 26.

The 316(b) workgroup is currently evaluating and revising the draft detailed questionnaire in light of

comments received during the public comment period (the public comment period ended on March 27, 1998). EPA received over 350 comments. The workgroup is also preparing the information collection request (ICR) scheduled to be submitted to OMB in July 1998.

Streamlining the General Pretreatment Program Requirements

EPA Headquarters has drafted a proposal to streamline a number of requirements under the General Pretreatment Regulations found in 40 CFR part 403. Several A

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 draft documents were provided to outside stakeholders (State regulators, governmental associations, professional and trade associations, and environmental interest groups) for review and comment prior to drafting the proposed rule. EPA has also discussed the issues with stakeholders at numerous public meetings, including several sponsored by the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies (AMSA) and the Water Environment Federation (WEF). The proposed regulatory changes address thirteen issues that include allowing POTWs to accept certain acidic wastes if these wastes will not damage their collection systems, exclusions or variable requirements for smaller facilities that contribute insignificant amounts of pollutants, clarification of requirements for implementing certain pretreatment standards, and more flexible reporting, inspection and sampling requirements. The proposed rule has been sent to OMB for formal review and concurrence. EPA anticipates publishing the proposal in the *Federal Register* in late summer 1998. For more information, contact Jeff Smith at (202) 260-5586.

Proposed Rule on Electronic Reporting in the NPDES Program

EPA is proposing changes to its NPDES regulations to allow reports and other information to be submitted electronically. When EPA promulgated the current NPDES regulations, the Agency did not anticipate the need or technologies for electronic reporting. Consequently, the current regulations do not specifically address use of electronic reporting technologies. The proposed rule would establish criteria for electronic reporting and a specific process and conditions for electronic reporting of discharge monitoring reports (DMR) to EPA that are intended to achieve reliable and secure electronic reporting in the NPDES program. The proposal addresses electronic signature, certification, and record keeping requirements that permittees would follow when submitting forms to EPA electronically. We expect to publish a proposed rule this fall. For more information contact Robin Danesi on (202) 260-2991.

Other News

Water Conservation Plan Guidelines

The Water Conservation Plan Guidelines Subcommittee presented their recommendations on the draft Guidelines to their parent committee, the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), on June 11, 1998. The LGAC approved the recommendations and will forward them to EPA. EPA is required to publish guidelines by August 6, 1998 and states have the option of requiring a water conservation plan as a condition of receiving a loan under a State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Program, in accordance with section

4 The Office of Wastewater Management

1455 of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Additionally, Office of Wastewater Management made a presentation on the Guidelines at the annual American Water Works Association National Conference in Dallas on June 24, 1998. The draft Guidelines and additional information on the development process can be accessed at <http://www.epa.gov/owm/genwave.htm>. Further information is also available from John Flowers at (202) 260-7288.

OWM staff briefed Bob Perciasepe and OGWDW on the status of the Water Conservation Plan Guidelines and the issue of the eligibility of conservation measures for funding under the DWSRF on June 19, 1998. OW will publish the Guidelines by August 6, 1998. Further information is also available from John Flowers at (202) 260-7288.

Water Alliances for Voluntary Efficiency (WAVE)

The WAVE program is gearing up to expand their targeted audience. The initial focus of WAVE has been the lodging industry. However, OWM is developing a new component of the WAVE-Saver software --our primary technical assistance tool --for educational institutions which will enable us to expand the WAVE audience to schools, colleges and universities. Our promotional materials, such as brochures, fact sheets and participant agreements, are also getting a whole new look to address our expanded audience and make joining the program easy. Additional information on WAVE is available at <http://www.epa.gov/owm/genwave.htm>, or you may call Valerie Martin at (202) 260-7259.

104(g) Onsite Technical Assistance Survey

Response to the Onsite Technical Assistance Survey continues to come in. Over 80% response so far. We recently followed up with a reminder urging those that have not responded to do so. Coding and data entering are underway which will be followed by data entering and report writing. For more information, contact Patrick Ogbebor on (202) 260-6322.

1998 National Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Awards

A nominations review panel met at the Water Environment Federation on June 9-11, 1998 to review regional applications and select National finalists for EPA's O&M awards. First and second place finalists were selected for nine O&M categories. The award finalists are currently undergoing a review and will be considered award winners when clearance is received. Winners will be announced publicly in late July 1998. For more information, contact Maria Campbell, on (202) 260-5815.

Mexican Border

The multi-agency Work Plan Committee (formerly the projects workgroup) charged with previewing border water and wastewater infrastructure projects for certification by the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC) has taken on the additional role of overseeing the work of the U.S./Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC). On June 5, 1998, the committee met in San Antonio to get the first three projects off the ground. They are development of a diagnostic system for current operations, an inventory of resources for training and

technical assistance, and establishment of improvement programs for basic community sanitation practices. For more information, contact Eliot Tucker on (202) 260-5842.

Environmentors Project

EPA has awarded a \$60,000 grant for The Environmentors Project to help disadvantaged high school teenagers improve their understanding of science and its role in environmental protection, while assisting them with identifying career opportunities in these fields. The project achieves its goals by matching the students with mentors from science and environmental professions. For more information, contact Maria Campbell on (202) 260-5815.

Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP)

The Municipal Assistance Branch is requesting approval for FY 1998 funding for the RCAP small community wastewater project in the amount of \$545,000. Funding is provided through a congressional add-on of \$257,000 and \$288,000 in the program's base budget. RCAP will contribute \$27,250 of in-kind services. RCAP's goals are to provide training, technical and financial management assistance to small, rural communities that have problems meeting their water quality needs. RCAP's services are at no cost to the communities. For more information, contact Maria Campbell on (202) 260-5815.

Hardship Grants for Rural Communities -Charging Ahead

Twelve Hardship Grants have been awarded to Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maryland, Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, Maine,

5 The Office of Wastewater Management

Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and Washington. Most States are combining their Hardship Grant funds with SRF loans to make projects more affordable and most projects will address areas plagued by failing septic tanks. Another eight applications have been received from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon. This summer promises to be eventful as an additional 13 applications are expected. The deadline for awarding Hardship Grants to the States and Territories is March 20, 1999. States and Territories currently expecting to submit applications in the last quarter of availability are Florida, Kansas, Iowa, New Mexico, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island and the Territories. For more information, contact Stephanie vonFeck on (202) 260-9762.

TRIBAL NEWS

Approval of Match Requirement for \$15M Alaska Sanitation Grant Program

On June 19, 1998, the Municipal Assistance Branch approved the 50 percent match requirement which Region 10 negotiated with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) for the FY'98 appropriation of \$15 million. The funding will be used to construct water and wastewater sanitation systems, and to provide training and technical assistance in rural and Alaska Native communities. Region 10 expects to make grant awards to Alaska DEC and DCRA in July 1998. This will increase total funding for the Alaska Sanitation Program to \$65 million, since its inception in 1995. For more information, contact Sylvia

Bell at (202) 260-7255.

Survey of Regional CW Indian Set-Aside Coordinators

Staff of the Municipal Assistance Branch briefed the Director & Deputy of the Municipal Support Division on the result of a survey of the Regional ISA Coordinators on outreach and technical assistance. The Coordinators manage program activities related to the award of grants to Indian tribes and Alaska Natives for the planning, design and construction of wastewater systems. The survey's purpose was to determine the extent to which Regional Coordinators are providing outreach, information and technical assistance to help tribes build the capacity to manage their wastewater systems. Survey results will be distributed to the Regions in early July 1998. In addition, a plan of action will be developed with the Regional CW ISA Coordinators to enhance our outreach activities for tribes. For more information, contact Sylvia Bell at (202) 260-7255.